



CITY OF CLEVELAND

Office of the Council

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Jeffrey D. Johnson COUNCIL MEMBER, WARD 10

COMMITTEES: Health & Human Services • Municipal Services & Properties
Transportation • Workforce & Community Benefits

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

Through my work in Cleveland Politics for almost 30 years, as a city councilman and state senator, in an impoverished area in Cleveland, I know the importance of free over the air television to my constituents. I am troubled that the FCC is considering eliminating the FCC blackout broadcast rule that has worked for over 40 years. This rule is a key part of a system that works for fans that watch NFL regular season and playoff games on free local television. The NFL is the only professional sports system that broadcasts all the regular and post-season games on free TV.

When the Browns stadium is at capacity, our local economy thrives, jobs are created and it guarantees all Cleveland Browns games will be available to Cleveland residents, not just those with cable television. A 2013 survey found that minorities currently make up 41% of all broadcast-only homes; up from 38% in 2010, this shows how crucial it is to leave the current NFL blackout rule in place. The Blackout Rule protects the taxpayers who fund the stadium, because it ensures the stadium is full, therefore bringing the maximum economic benefit to the area, which was promised to voters. On average, a home Browns game brings almost \$8 million in economic benefits to the City of Cleveland.

Nearly all (more than 99 percent) of last season's games were broadcast on free local television, and the NFL is actively working to see that fans have access to every game in 2014. The current system is strong and isn't in need of a government fix. Fans in Cleveland shouldn't be forced to pay to watch games they already get for free. Please help protect my local community, local businesses, the Cleveland economy, and fans in Cleveland that depend on this important rule. Everyone wins when NFL stadiums are full, and games are on free TV.

Sincerely,

Councilman Jeffrey Johnson
Cleveland, Ward 10

CC:
Ms. Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner
Ms. Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
Mr. Ajit Pai, Commissioner
Mr. Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner

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